

ZONING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

July 15, 2026



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 117 S Hamilton Street

Project Name: The Pressman

Application Type: Approval for Comprehensive Design Review for Signage

Legistar File ID # [93707](#)

Prepared By: Chrissy Thiele, Zoning Inspector; Jessica Vaughn, Urban Design Commission Secretary

The applicant is requesting a Comprehensive Design Review for signage (CDR) for an existing mixed-use building, which has 80 residential units and about 6,500 sq. ft. of commercial space. This development is in a Planned Development (PD) zoning district, which allows for signage as permitted in the Downtown Core (DC) zoning district. The property is situated on S Hamilton Street (2 lanes, 25 mph), W Doty Street (2 lanes, 25 mph), and S Carroll Street (1 lane, 25 mph). In addition to having a CDR, the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines apply.

As part of the CDR request, the applicant is requesting:

- Two parking lot directional signs designed as projecting signs, both less than 15 sq. ft. per side, where the Sign Code permits these signs to be 3 sq. ft. per side and only as wall or ground signs;

(Staff note that these signs are existing signs. Because these signs were installed without sign permits, for the purposes of this review, these signs shall be considered as new signage.)

- Two projecting signs, one for each tenant space on S Carroll Street, where the Sign Code only permits one projecting sign on each street facing elevation;
- One wall sign facing W Doty Street, which is code compliant; and
- One existing ground sign (10 sq. ft.), which is code compliant.

Staff note that this is an existing sign which does have an approved sign permit. While the ground sign complies with the Sign Code, all signage on the zoning lot are part of the CDR request and should be considered in the Commission's evaluation of the proposed signage and CDR approval criteria. In this case, this sign is the **only** sign that identifies the residential lobby on S Hamilton Street.

Comprehensive Design Review - Approval Criteria

Pursuant to Section 31.043(4)(b), MGO, the UDC shall apply the following criteria upon review of an application for a Comprehensive Sign Plan:

1. The Sign Plan **shall create visual harmony between the signs, building(s), and building site through unique and exceptional use of materials, design, color, any lighting, and other design elements; and shall result in signs of appropriate scale and character to the uses and building(s) on the zoning lot as well as adjacent buildings, structures and uses.**
2. Each element of the Sign Plan **shall be found to be necessary due to unique or unusual design aspects in the architecture or limitations in the building site or surrounding environment; except that when a request for an Additional Sign Code Approval under Sec. 31.043(3) is included in the Comprehensive Design Review, the sign(s) eligible for approval under Sec. 31.043(3) shall meet the applicable criteria of Sec. 31.043(3), except**

that sign approvals that come to Comprehensive Design Review from MXC and EC districts pursuant to 31.13(3) and (7) need not meet the criteria of this paragraph.

- 3. The Sign Plan shall not violate any of the stated purposes described in Sec. 31.02(1) and 33.24(2).*
- 4. All signs must meet minimum construction requirements under Sec. 31.04(5).*
- 5. The Sign Plan shall not approve Advertising beyond the restrictions in Sec. 31.11 or Off-Premise Directional Signs beyond the restrictions in Sec. 31.115.*
- 6. The Sign Plan shall not be approved if any element of the plan:*
 - a. presents a hazard to vehicular or pedestrian traffic on public or private property,*
 - b. obstructs views at points of ingress and egress of adjoining properties,*
 - c. obstructs or impedes the visibility of existing lawful signs on adjacent property, or*
 - d. negatively impacts the visual quality of public or private open space.*
- 7. The Sign Plan may only encompass signs on private property of the zoning lot or building site in question, and shall not approve any signs in the right of way or on public property.*

Projecting Signs Permitted per Sign Ordinance: This zoning lot is allowed a projecting sign on every elevation facing a street with a maximum net area of 20 sq. ft. per side, based on the number of traffic lanes. Also, if a ground and projecting sign are displayed on the same zoning lot, only one (1) of such signs, where permitted, may exceed twelve (12) square feet in net area.

Proposed Signage: The applicant is proposing a blade sign, one each, for the two commercial tenant spaces along S Carroll Street. The Sign Code only permits one projecting sign per elevation facing a street. In total, there would be three total projecting signs on the S Carroll Street façade.

As noted in the CDR, two tenant projecting signs are proposed. The CDR would allow each tenant to have a blade sign that does not exceed 14 sq. ft. per side, have an under clearance of 10', and the top of each blade sign cannot go beyond the bottom of the second-floor window.

In addition to the two tenant projecting signs on S Carroll Street, there will be one parking lot directional sign that is also a projecting sign. Historically, the UDC have approved multiple projecting signs on the same elevation in cases where there are multiple tenant spaces and where the building size/length and design allow adequate separation between signs so as not to create the appearance of clutter. For reference, staff note the HUB on W Gorham (Legistar File ID [83457](#)), Hotel Indigo on E Washington (Legistar File ID [84959](#)) and 109 E Wilson (Legistar File ID [88298](#)). In this case, there is approximately 30 feet between signs and multiple tenant spaces, which appears to be consistent with past approvals.

Staff Comments: Given the higher level of pedestrian traffic in the downtown core, projecting signage is a prevalent sign type that is used to assist with business identification from a pedestrian perspective. S Carroll Street is a single lane street, with limited one-way vehicle traffic. The proposed blade signs would provide better visibility than a wall sign for the commercial tenants, as well as identification of public parking, especially when viewed from the vehicular or pedestrian perspectives from a distance (CDR Criterion #2). The proposed projecting signs **would not** be illuminated and would consist of dimensional letters on an aluminum cabinet, adding interest to the sign (CDR Criterion No. 1). In addition, the proposed projecting signage appears to be generally consistent with the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, which generally speak to signage being well integrated with the building design and designed with a sensitivity to context.

Recommendation: Staff have no objection to the CDR request and recommend the UDC find the standards for CDR review have been met. This recommendation is subject to further testimony and new information provided during the hearing.

Parking Lot Signage Permitted per Sign Ordinance: Summarizing Section 31.03(2) and 31.044(1)(I), parking lot directional signage is necessary for safety or prompting traffic flow to a location on the premises on which the sign is located. These signs can be a maximum size of 3 sq. ft. with a maximum height of 10', and two signs per street frontage. These types of signs are exempt from permits and are required to be wall or ground signs.

Proposed Signage: The applicant is requesting two parking lot directional signs designed as projecting signs, both under 15 sq. ft. each, and mounted higher than 10' above grade. One is mounted above the underground parking garage entrance facing W Doty Street and the other is above the door for the elevator lobby on S Carroll Street that provides access to the underground parking.

Staff Comments: Directional signage is only permitted to be wall or ground signage, with a maximum height of 10'. However, code compliant directional signage would be easily overlooked by vehicles given the limited visibility of a significantly smaller sign that would either be wall or ground mounted. The proposed signs are located such that both pedestrians and vehicular traffic can identify their respective entrances to the underground parking garage.

The proposed parking lot directional signs, designed as projecting signs and being larger than what the code allows, will be more effective in identifying these entrances by vehicles and pedestrians. While they are larger than what the code would allow, the increased size continues to be appropriately scaled with the building design and details (CDR Criterion #2). The signs are of high design, consisting of routed metal face with push-through acrylic for the address and halo lighting for the parking symbol (CDR Criterion #1). In addition, the proposed parking lot directional projecting signage appears to be generally consistent with the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, which generally speak to signage being well integrated with the building design and being designed with a sensitivity to context.

Recommendation: Staff have no objection to the requested parking lot directional signage and recommend the UDC find the CDR criteria have been met. This recommendation is subject to further testimony and new information provided during the hearing.

Recommended Conditions of Approval:

1. The CDR Letter of Intent shall be revised as follows:
 - WLI Sign at W Doty Street: Shall be revised to remove the word “blade” from the first bullet point, as this is a wall sign, not a projecting sign.
 - WLI Sign at W Doty Street: Shall be revised to remove the second bullet “This sign is code compliant. The sign code allows for two (2) feet per lineal front of tenant space, not to exceed 100% of the signable area OR 40% of the signable area. In this case that would be 17 SF.”
 - BN-1 and BN-2 Signs at S Carroll Street: Shall be revised to reflect “Blade signs copy to be at least ½” dimensional lettering” to allow for thicker lettering if the tenant chooses in the future.
2. BI-1 sign graphics shall be revised to have consistent sign dimensions (3'6" x 4'3").
3. BI-2 sign graphics shall be revised to have consistent sign dimensions (2'6" x 2'10").
4. BI-2 sign graphics shall be revised to reflect a projecting sign, not a hanging sign.